

Coins

Designer initials on nickel a sometimes thing

By Roger Boye

HERE ARE some questions from the reader mailbag:

Q—I collect 20th Century United States coins, and I try to find out as much as I can about them. My question concerns the Jefferson nickel. On other coins in my collection [the penny and the dime, for example], I've been able to locate the designer's initials. But not so on the nickel. Why were they left off?—T. L., Chicago

A—You must have been looking at Jefferson nickels made before 1966. Starting that year,

the initials of the designer, Felix Schlag, were placed on the nickel at the base of Jefferson's portrait near the rim.

The Jefferson nickels made from 1938 to 1965 did not carry the initials. It is said Schlag didn't place his initials on the coin because he didn't know he was allowed to. Other U. S. coins made from 1938 to 1965 carried the designers' initials.

Incidentally, the artist Schlag, once a Chicago resident, won \$1,000 in a national contest in 1938 to design the nickel. He died in Michigan two years ago at the age of 82.

Q—I have two National Currency notes—a \$10

bill from the Federal Reserve bank of Cleveland, and a \$20 bill from the Federal Reserve bank of Dallas. Both are series 1929 with the signatures of Jones and Woods, and both are in mint condition. Are they worth any more than face value?—F. G., Chicago

A—Yes, they certainly are. Recent catalogs list the average dealer selling price for your \$10 bill as about \$50 and for your \$20 bill as about \$75. Prices are for new [uncirculated] notes.

If you have questions about coins and collecting, send them to me, in care of Room 414, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Av., Chicago, Ill. 60611. But, please, do not send coins.